

The points outlined in the report were discussed. An investigation must be limited in order that we would be fair with the people involved.

1. a. "I never go beyond an occasional hell and damn." In fact the secretary to the president has a very high level of tolerance and she has a difficult time staying on the job with the vile expressions coming out of the office. A former student in Forest states that under no circumstances will he let his children go to this school as long as the president has no respect for ladies in his conversation. In fact he doesn't want that man to come to his home or business. An automotive dealer at Morton refused to escort the man further in his business because of the embarrassment caused by the continued profanity of the man in the presence of some lady whom he brought and the secretary to the business. He has no intentions of sending his children to E.C.J.C. as long as that is the quality of the President.

Comment: Like it or not, the former students and patrons of the school expect more from the President than uncouth language, and disrespect of the womanhood of our area. Too many incidents have occurred for it to go unnoticed any longer.

b. "The board was informed of my drinking, and that I keep it in my home and at the Country Club." "As long as I don't get drunk within the Junior College District, or appear at any function in the district inebriated."

Comment 1. I was not surprised that a retired serviceman would do this, however, I was surprised to learn that the law of the State of Mississippi meant nothing to him. Here we must all do some self-examination and measure up short but this does not excuse the President of a School of having a night cap each and every night.

Com. 2. The Board does not derive the right from any source and therefore cannot grant a right that they do not have to any individual to break the laws of the state. This particular act is forbidden by the Mississippi Code and was reaffirmed in 1958.

Com. 3. The board is treading on thin ice when it surmises that ignorance of the law is permissible in the office of the President of the School where the patrons, like it or not, expect not only legal conduct but a certain conformity to the local customs and mores.

c. The President stated that he was invited to a cocktail party as soon as he was in town and that to him this was custom and mores enough.

Comment 1. The President is guilty of poor judgement when he supposes that one cocktail party in Decatur is the style or custom of the city.

Comment 2. The people are horrified when they come home from church and see the President and family playing or working on the yard in shorts. They rather expect some reverence on Sunday.

Comment 3. When the President comes into the Student Center and passes out playing cards, cigarettes to girls and sits on the counter and tells them it is perfectly all right to do these things, he is frustrating the students who have been taught that this or that or possibly all of these things are morally wrong and not subject to sanction by the President. This frustrates student, embarrasses parents and outrages alumni of the school. This naturally hurts the reputation of the school and in fact makes it ineffective for these people.

Comment 4. The excuse that too strict rules causes students to leave a supervised activity and go other places to practice their baser drives may be enough for some people but I find it inexcusable to lower standards of conduct in order to cater to students whom you are responsible to educate above these base drives. For the record, we had seven cases of G.C. at Decatur last year among the male students alone, and no telling about the others. We have records of drunken girls being kept in the infirmary without the parents being given the diagnosis of their complaints. This is life but it is new to the old grads and they don't appreciate this too much.

2. a. Mr. President states that for the first time this school is being run under the recommendations set up by the Kellogg Foundations and this has been established in the catalogue and is therefore part of the teacher contract obligations.

- (1) This faculty is of such stature that they will continue to do a good professional job as long as they are here but working conditions are now changing and there is no guarantee that they will stay. Loyalty to school and profession has kept most of the faculty from joining in the investigation. Also, perhaps they feel that time will straighten out most of the problems. We expect professionals to play by the rules but we also know that rules must be reasonable. The size of the faculty and staff at ECJC, which is less than fifty, hardly requires military or any other kind of regimentation, in fact the antithesis should be true. Kellogg or not, there is no substitute for free communication of faculty, student and administration to make a school strong and proud of its accomplishments. No organization is stronger than its weakest member and if it doesn't promote the best toward excellence it is useless. It may be too early to judge this new innovation but if we lose faculty members while we are waiting on the experiment, we are the losers.
- (2) There seems to be some questions as to whether all faculty members should be required to keep library for study hours and to sell or take up tickets at ball games. In checking other schools it is found that this policy varies and those who don't want to participate are not placed in jeopardy of losing their job. Here you are threatened with "insubordination" whatever that means to a college faculty member. This single fact has caused some friction and the military dictator instinct seems to be easily aroused, and the tendency for some to become reactive and vindictive especially among the dissident members is evident. This hurts our school and does violence to her image. We were told that a certain teacher knew of a fomenting riot but instead of reporting it was aided and abetted. We were told also, that one teacher had served notice that she was not going to sell tickets; the intentions of the president were clearly stated, "if she does not I will not recommend her staying on the faculty." (although this member has a very fine record and has been here a long time and has respect for the other colleges across the state and southeast).
- (3) The President arbitrarily threw out some Nab (concession) boxes of the Wesley Foundation under questionable circumstances; in fact he might have lied about the tax situation on these boxes and caused a scene with the very capable Rev. J. L. Neill about this and has made it difficult for Rev. Neill to do his work when he obviously has broken down communications deliberately.

- (4) In the matter of discipline, there have been two occasions on which the committee has been overruled and the vindictive nature of the man has been revealed when he expelled the one man, and the other came up with his father and a lawyer and a threat of suit for defamation of character and the President backed down.
- (5) In one case when the committee recommended one way, he was heard to say "no lets do it this way, I am going to get these boys one way or another." This is a fine remark coming from a man whose business is to help this child find the proper way to discipline to vow to throw him out and put a blight on his future chances of public education. In the service you could be librated to civilian status. In normal life this is a black mark that you carry to your grave. This leaves us wondering why have a president at all! If this is administration, then the predecessors didn't have it and we don't need any more of it. The business of destroying a faculty can be done by anyone. It doesn't take a PhD in military science to do it. This man tends to snap judgment and will sacrifice anyone or anything to back up this bad judgment which is of course an indictment of his prudence.

3. The students do not feel that they have an audience with the administration. In fact the administration has gone out of its way to give the students the impression that they are the most important people here, but by the uncerecermonious canning of some of them in spite of the action of the discipline committee of the faculty, apparently only for a personality difference, has caused a feeling of suspicion and distrust all around.

Statistics were given to show that 60.7 % of those who came to school returned which is .7% better than the attrition rate nationally but not better than the usual record of this institution. Those who had started a two year course had a return rate of 70% which is close to average. The overall problem is that in the year when we are supposed to have the largest enrollment reaching a peak in 1964-65, we have now a smaller enrollment in number of pupils in spite of the industrial courses offered. We fear the futur when the rumors are flying about our school and this will make recruiting much more difficult in the days ahead. Thus it follows that some very definite steps should be taken now to overcome the bad news that is being dispensed about our school, and every one concerned rally to support her and make her great.

4. The suggestion that there was no love for school, its traditions, etc. was met with this remark. This you cannot measure. To show for what it is worth, the President remarked that he had recently been approached to go to another school at a higher salary and had declined. We have since learned that this offer was from a college with no resident students and that this possibly had a bearing on the decision. At any rate he states that he and his wife love the place and plan to stay and make it their home. He says that his offic door is never closed and that anyone is welcome all the time. A recent interviewee for a place on the faculty states that the conduct was so obtuse that he was shocked. He states not only was the door open but the dirty feet of the President were right in his face; in general the applicant was so embarrassed that he was glad when the meeting was over and promised his friend who accompanied him, never again will I put up with this again.

5. In commenting on the public relations situation of the school he stated that there was once a public relations officer and that when this individual got a job and left the institution no replacement was named. This caused some talk but he has information from the state office that shows that ECJC has more news releases than any other school.

My comment here is that in this case it is just possible that the other schools are sadly lacking in this department. Our investigation showed that we do have many press releases, but they fail to reflect a healthy growing school atmosphere; they are elementary in scope and content. This department is presided over by the president personally and should reflect his ideas if so the image created here seems to matter little and in fact you cannot reflect growth or progress in your press releases if this is not being accomplished. Public relations is more than press releases or publicity. It is the process of creating a favorable image of the school by communication to the public, the aims, objectives and accomplishments of the institution. It not only tells about some one or some group, but also tells what others think of it, plans ways and means of earning that good will; it encourages programs and activities that will win good will.

6. Alumni attitude, the President stated that when he came to the school he immediately visited the various alumni groups in each county in the district and that he was disappointed at the attendance and program of each group. He states that he has been invited back to speak to these groups again.

Comment: At least one group that he returned to speak to was at his own request and somewhat to the embarrassment of the president of the group. We are not very closely knit as an alumni group nor has there been any need for such. No request or appeal has been made that didn't meet with success. State supported institutions at this level seldom make requests. Our graduates are as loyal and generous as any other group, and will continue this way responding to legitimate requests of every kind. The weakness here must be in leadership who needs things and has not the finesse or diplomacy to make these things known.

The fact that baseball and tennis have been dropped are strictly because of non-participation. The budgets, while small, were better used in intermural programs.

Comment: There has to be a level of competition in the Junior College level that gives complete athletic program. There is very little thought it should be a profit making enterprise. I personally would not quarrel with this decision unless it made our image look bad as compared with like schools. This step should be taken only after some education has been done in this direction.

Conclusions: Running through this whole whoop and warp of this discussion and investigation is a complete lack of respect or apparent appreciation of what the Presidency of this college demands of its holder and the respect usually accorded it by the patrons. A severe incomprehension of the damage being done the institution by such inconsistent and childish display of the chief, and the only explanation given is that the board knows and agrees. Heaven help us when a man with already questionable judgment becomes affected even if just the least bit by alcohol, drugs, or what have you is put in the position of making judgments that will effect the lives of our children from here on. This man has a clearly established habit of snap judgments, and is indued with traits that make him willing to sacrifice a man to prove a point. There can be no excuse for our not demanding and getting the sober best that is in whomever we hire for the job. No time in the life of the school compares with this and at no time have we had weaker leadership in the presidency and on the board to meet the challenges of the day. We should be at our peak service this and next year and are not even up to last year. We have a man who by his own admission, has a night cap every night and at every opportunity partakes further when the occasion arises. This man does not demonstrate enough understanding that when a student is thrown out of school his whole future educational potential is effected, not an army career which he can chuck and start over as a civilian without any trouble. We need personnel here that will direct a student and salvage all educable students, not someone who will say "if I don't get him on this I will on something else." This is unpardonable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Since adjustment comes slowly as we grow older and this man is a retired serviceman, we would go along with giving him ample time to work out his program provided, that some broad outline is given by the board that will relate his work to this school and this community, not an imaginary ideal down in Florida, or some other place, with adequate supervision and help from the board in adjusting to this situation.

We go along with the idea that a man should have the privilege of choosing his workers and helpers, provided that his judgment has been such that the integrity of the school will not be jeopardized in the transition. This man walked into a situation that was running and he had little opportunity to do anything but run along with it for one year. We deplore this kind of transition of administration.

We would think it out of order to have pressure brought on any faculty or staff member for cooperation with this committee, and will resist any effort by anyone to intimidate them or harass them for this participation. There should be some means for this kind of investigation to be carried on without having to cause crises with the administration, and the fact that a faculty must have permission to see board members is outrageous. Thus, some arrangement should be made for the faculty to have a place to "let off steam" and communicate to the board.

We would say that it is unthinkable that a group of trustees of this school would attempt to practice subterfuge and consent to or attempt to give a privilege to a president of this school to break the laws of the state by keeping liquor on the campus and daily imbibe. The fact that one in his own life may be less than what he would like to be does not give a person rights ~~to confer on any other citizen whether in your employ or not the right to break the law, and especially does this smack of unfaithful service in a school.~~ There are enough friends of the school and alumni in this district that some more reasonable method of choosing trustees should be considered and it is not unreasonable to require that at least a majority of the board should be alumni of the institution.

The Attorney for the board will be given the names, dates and places of the occurrences of these acts, if the board sees fit to launch its own investigation into these things. I would suggest that the man be informed of these things and the findings and given adequate time by the board to adjust the deficiencies if these are such. If in a reasonable time this has not been done then the contract should be reviewed and adjustments made there.

I would like to emphasize again that I have no personal malice in my heart for Dr. Montgomery. I have written these thoughts down, not to attempt to sit in judgment on a man, but to show my concern for the school and its president. If the Board of Directors of the Alumni Association wishes to add any comment or other result of other investigators, I hope they will feel free to do this.

The proper routine to be followed to stay clear of accreditation problems is to submit your report to the President, who should be asked to submit your report to the school board. If he fails to do this, then other measures would be in order if deemed advisable. I think that this editorial comment and meat of investigation should not be given to the Board of Trustees at this time and if they take action on the shorter report then want this information, it should be given to their duly authorized investigator and him or them alone.

Submitted this 12th day of December 1963.

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